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ABSTRACT

Findings from a survey and comparison of urban Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs generated several statements of action implications for urban ABE directors: (1) differentiate major target populations for purposes of program development and reporting; (2) make two parallel efforts to recruit participants--one for easiest-to-reach, middle class-oriented, undereducated adults, the other for hardest-to-reach, poorest, and least educated; (3) recognize the distinctive qualities and functions of community outreach and feeder classes; allocate resources to maximize their effectiveness; (4) exploit advantages of co-sponsorship and develop effective strategies for initiating and sustaining co-sponsor linkages; (5) recognize major dynamics of the ABE classroom aside from aiding content mastery to improve teacher performance; (6) encourage preparation of short-term instructional units which provide feedback on learner progress toward their goals; (7) incorporate systematic analysis of qualitative factors in program development and evaluation; (8) recognize the interrelatedness of instructional roles and utilize paraprofessionals and counselors to optimize instructional effectiveness; (9) allocate more resources for staff development designed to deal with instruction and classroom interaction as it exists in reality; and (10) periodically review innovative program practices and systematically incorporate the most promising. (KM)

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ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF ABE EXPERIENCE IN THE INNER CITY: TOWARD A THEORY OF PRACTICE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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SELECTED ACTION IMPLICATIONS FOR URBAN ABE DIRECTORS

Working Paper Prepared for Regional Workshops
May-June, 1971

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project was funded as a two-year effort. The first year featured a comparative study, using field research methods, of six urban ABE programs. The objective was to develop a comprehensive, dependable normative description of urban program dynamics, and through analysis of commonalities, formulate generalizations useful to decision makers in policy and program development, evaluation, staff training and in setting research and demonstration priorities. This analytical frame of reference, based upon comparative data pertaining to program structure and functional dynamics, classroom interaction and student and teacher perspectives, constitutes the beginnings of a "theory of practice" of urban ABE in the public schools.

The study was undertaken through a collaborative effort by teams working out of the University of California, University of Michigan, Northeastern University and Teachers College, Columbia University, to study ABE programs in San Francisco, San Jose, Detroit, Boston, Washington, D.C., and New York. A team from Columbia conducted 105 one-hour structured interviews with program administrators and staff in the six cities. Participant observers operating from the various campuses were attached to a stratified sample of 59 classes in five cities over a nine month period. From their 237 field reports and interview data, commonalities and differences in program practice, social interaction and perspectives of key actors were analyzed.

Findings were tested against the experience of six leading urban ABE directors in a group consultation. Two national surveys, one of

124 urban directors and another of 2000 ABE teachers were initiated to further establish universality of findings and provide a needed set of norms on national urban program practice.

The final report covering first year's operations is organized in seven sections, the first on Project development and methodology. The second is an organizational model, a composite analytical description of structure and functional dynamics of the six programs: setting, goals, staff, recruitment, sites and facilities, finance, materials program development and counseling service. Classroom interaction is described and analyzed in the third section with specific attention given attendance maintenance, rules and conventions, instruction, an ideology and tactics of minimizing failure and teacher control. Sections four and five describe participants and teachers respectively: their characteristics, motivations and perspectives -- the way they see themselves in the program, each other, the program as such and, in the case of the teachers, their administrators and supervisors. The role and problems of the counselor and his relationships with teachers and participants is dealt with in sections six. Section seven is devoted to 23 implications for changes in policy, administration, program and staff development.

Second year of the Project involves study of selected program innovations in 24 cities from the vantage point of the first year's findings, using comparative field methods to identify factors impeding and facilitating adoption and development.

The Project also commissioned development of a set of prototype training packages involving lesson plans and supporting multi-media kits for teacher training in areas identified by our study as critically important.

Four regional workshops are being conducted, each involving about forty urban ABE directors, professors of adult education and officials from USOE. These group consultations, designed to test action implications from the research, will explore the potentialities and problems of implementation.

ACTION IMPLICATION FOR ABE DIRECTORS

Our research findings have generated several tentative statements of action implications for urban ABE directors. These are formulated as points of departure for focused discussion, as hypotheses not conclusions. We hope to draw upon collective experience in the workshop to test, elaborate, refine and, as necessary, redefine them. The additional data and new analytical insights which result will be incorporated in the final reports of Project findings.

In this document the term "elementary adult education" (EAE) differentiates classes for the native born from those for the foreign born, commonly known as "English as a second language" (ESL). We recognize that "elementary adult education" does not connote the precise intent of these classes. Perhaps the workshop can reach consensus on a more appropriate name.

Section I

A. DIFFERENTIATE MAJOR TARGET POPULATIONS FOR PURPOSES OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND REPORTING.

Each local ABE program serves a broad diversity of educationally deprived adults. Participants differ substantially in age, employment status, income level, educational attainment, ethnic background, native language, academic aptitude and place of residence. A program appropriately seeks to serve as many as possible of those who need basic educational and coping skills. The mix of participants in a program is reflected in differing rates of enrollment and retention. Some categories of potential participants are clearly better bets than others.

However, program goals also include a commitment to maintain a balance between major clientele groups. Few directors would be satisfied if their ABE participants were exclusively adults working at the seventh or eigth grade levels or for whom English is a second language.

The problem with first come-first served is that the program becomes a victim of a reverse Gresham's law: sub-populations with the highest enrollment and retention rates tend to displace other groups. This shift in clientele is most rapid when enrollment increases faster than funding. The result in many communities is that few of the least educated adults participate in ABE programs. A suggested solution is to differentiate major target groups for purposes of program development and reporting.

Specific groups within the target population to be preserved

as part of ABE's clientele will vary from community to community. This depends upon population characteristics and the nature of other local basic education programs In most programs a major target sub-population is the least educated, variously referred to as hard core, most disadvantaged and poorest. Other major target groups may in some communities be high school dropouts, working mothers, unemployed men, Indians, the foreign born or others.

The process of designating target populations for major emphasis is a form of agency goal setting. This policy making process is more likely to influence practice if those who must implement the policy participate in the process and if it includes attention to both purposes and resource allocation.

One way to differentiate major target groups is to designate corresponding program areas within ABE. For instance, if local planners decide to focus on the least educated group and to devote a quarter of the ABE effort over several years to that sub-population, several decisions might follow. An internal budget might be projected for this purpose to reflect the unique requirements of recruitment, instruction and related services essential to assure optimal progression of the educationally most deprived to third grade equivalency. This would contrast with the remainder of the ABE program which may place priority on reaching the maximum number of persons with available funds.

The number of least educated adults to be served would be limited by the cost per participant. Supervisory and instructional staff for this program area, and their approache , would be selected according to the distinctive requirements of the target group within

the context of the stated objectives. Unit cost would be relatively high; it simply will cost more to provide the more intensive, specialized and individualized service required to help the least educated adult progress than is the case for other ABE students. Because of the much more difficult task of recruiting and especially educating and retaining this group, different administrative expectations are appropriate.

A related way to differentiate major target populations is to arrange for separate categories for reporting. Most ABE directors are convinced that there is a direct connection between level of reported enrollment and the level of funding they receive. As long as enrollment is reported as a total figure, the maximizing service approach will predominate at the expense of efforts to reach the poorest or other target populations difficult to attract and retain. Differentiated reporting categories could protect programs which set priorities among target populations from being penalized for doing so.

B. MAKE TWO PARALLEL EFFORTS TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS ONE FOR EASIEST TO REACH, MIDDLE CLASS ORIENTED UNDEREDUCATED ADULTS, THE OTHER FOR HARDEST TO REACH, POOREST AND LEAST EDUCATED.

The characteristics of ABE's clientele partly reflect the program's recruitment and retention practices. In reality, ABE programs attempt to attract as many participants as possible with the available funds. This approach is referred to as maximizing service. In maximizing service, the middle class oriented ways of attracting participants in common use are relatively effective. Some programs also make a special

effort to attract a substantial number of the poorest and least educated. This approach may be referred to as reaching the poorest. There is growing evidence that adults in this target population have sufficiently different patterns of information seeking to warrant differentiated recruitment efforts.

In the "maximizing service"approach, those most readily attracted are similar to middle class adults who typically participate in adult education. Many ABE programs focus on this target population because the investment in recruitment yields more people enrolling, more persisting and more progressing faster. The standard recruitment method is word of mouth by satisfied participants. In a few ABE programs, participants are encouraged to distribute flyers, talk to groups or invite acquaintances to attend the ABE program. Fewer of the least educated know an ABE participant. Many ABE directors encourage people from employers, churches, welfare and employment agencies to refer undereducated adults to the ABE program. Fewer of the least educated take advice from other than close friends. Some directors arrange for co-sponsorship of ABE classes with employers or churches so that membership by an undereducated adult in the co-sponsoring organization facilitates entry into ABE. Fewer of the least educated are associated with formal organizations. Many directors use mass media, such as newspaper articles, radio announcements or brochures to let undereducated adults know about the ABE program. Fewer of the least educated attend to mass media for instrumental purposes, but instead use it almost exclusively for entertainment purposes.

In the "reaching the poorest" approach, different recruitment methods are needed. One of the most promising is the organization of vestibule activities in which the primary purpose is to increase readiness for ABE classes. The objective of the vestibule activity is achieved when the adult successfully begins an ABE class. Examples include vocational counseling and informal living room learning groups.

The use of recruiters has produced mixed results. In some ABE programs door-to-door recruiters produced few participants who continued in the program. In others, however, paid paraprofessionals were successful in establishing contact with potential participants who enrolled and persisted in the program. This role is similar to that of the block or street worker associated with some CAP agencies.

Another method is to relate ABE participation to programs and services in which the undereducated adult is a recipient, such as financial assistance or employment. An example is the program sponsored by the National Alliance of Businessmen. Often this results in more clearly establishing ABE participation as a step towards a tangible goal.

C. RECOGNIZE THE DISTINCTIVE QUALITIES AND FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND FEEDER CLASSES; ALLOCATE RESOURCES TO MAXIMIZE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS.

A major problem in ABE is reaching the undereducated adult who is either unwilling or unable to attend class outside his own neighborhood. These individuals are often the poorest and least educated. The program's response in many cities has been to set up classes in local community facilities, such as churches and public housing projects, to "reach out" to those who would not otherwise participate. Usually, these classes are characterized by ethnic or racial homogeneity, extreme variation in achievement levels and low and precarious enrollment.

Unusual variation in student achievement level and English language facility is perhaps the most serious obstacle to the educational effectiveness of community outreach classes. A common problem in ABE, it is exacerbated in outreach locations where it is not possible to separate students on the basis of achievement level. Even the best teachers find it difficult to deal with a class composed of students with widely varying backgrounds and needs. Under these conditions, classroom learning could be significantly enhanced by instruction on a small group and individual basis. Consequently, community outreach classes should be given high priority in the assignment of aides and volunteers to provide the necessary assistance.

There has been a continuing debate about the relative advantages and disadvantages of community outreach classes. Advantages of

outreach classes include: 1) extension of ABE opportunities to the hardest to reach and most disadvantaged portion of the target population; 2) a learning environment enhanced by the social cohesion that results from common membership in a church or other organization; and 3) greater visibility for ABE in the community and broader community support. Among the disadvantages are: 1) higher per student cost; 2) problems of coordination and logistics; 3) poor facilities; 4) lack of instructional equipment and a wide choice of materials; 5) lack of means to group students by achievement level; and 6) difficulty in providing counseling services.

Whether advantages outweigh disadvantages depends in large measure on local community conditions and the goals and educational philosophy of the local director and his staff. One seldom used strategy to exploit advantages and to minimize disadvantages of outreach classes is to establish them as temporary feeder classes to channel students to better equipped centralized locations after initial fears, misunderstanding about the program, and other sources of resistance are overcome. This would entail a major emphasis on program orientation and counseling and would require recruitment of teachers with very special abilities.

There is also need for a different kind of feeder class to serve centralized, multi-class sites. Evidence from interviews with students and teachers suggests that continuous enrollment of new students is seriously detrimental to effective teaching and learning. New students require an inordinate amount of the teacher's time. Moreover, new students are seldom screened carefully and are often

inappropriately placed in a class compounding the problem. It is probable that latecomers often fail to catch up with the class, become discouraged, and drop out at a disproportionate rate. These problems could be substantially mitigated by establishing a feeder class for late enrollees. The feeder class would enable accurate assessment of achievement level (or ability to speak English) as the basis for placement in an ongoing class at an appropriate time. It could also provide much-needed counseling and program orientation for latecomers. Because of student heterogeneity in achievement level and the need for intensive individual attention, priority in assignment of aides and volunteers should be given to these classes.

D. EXPLOIT ADVANTAGES OF CO-SPONSORSHIP AND DEVELOP EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR INITIATING AND SUSTAINING CO-SPONSOR LINKAGES.

A co-sponsor is any organization or agency that provides enough members or employees to justify an ABE class. It may also furnish space for the class to meet. A co-sponsor can be a small membership organization, such as a church or community group, a large employer such as an industrial plant or hospital or a "total" institutional environment, for example a prison or nursing home.

Co-sponsorship is a potentially effective way to recruit participants and expand the ABE program. It also serves to extend ABE into the community and to reach many who might otherwise not participate. A significant educational advantage in many co-sponsored classes is greater group cohesion and support among participants. Educational achievement is likely to be greater in classes co-sponsored by employers in which there are external incentives and common or similar goals among participants. There may be substantial savings for the ABE program when the co-sponsor provides classroom space; occasionally large employers will also furnish funds for materials and instructional equipment. Increased visibility in the community and a potentially potent organizational constituency to voice community support for ABE are additional advantages.

The principal disadvantage of co-sponsorship is the substantial time and effort usually required to initiate and sustain the relationship. Not only are preliminary arrangements time consuming, but maintaining the relationship can be a formidable task requiring some diplomatic skill, particularly if problems develop between teachers and co-sponsors.

Maintaining enrollment can also be a problem, particularly when dealing with small community organizations such as churches and CAP agencies. When the co-sponsor is a large employer, such as a hospital or industry, it can be difficult to ensure uninterrupted class time or a permanent meeting place.

Many problems can be avoided or minimized if certain strategies are employed in the initial planning stage. For example, it is usually advantageous to negotiate agreements with high ranking personnel in the co-sponsoring organization, particularly if it is a large, bureaucratic organization such as a hospital, industrial firm, or governmental agency. Approval by high ranking officials generally results in greater cooperation from operational level personnel, greater recognition of ABE, minimization of red tape and elimination of delay necessitated by going up the chain of command.

It can also be helpful in initial planning with the co-sponsor to involve personnel at various levels in the organization who will have contact with ABE participants and staff. Teachers should also be included. When participation in planning is not feasible, it is vitally important that details of the arrangement be communicated to teachers and relevant co-sponsor personnel. Consideration might also be given to including in the planning representatives of the adults who will participate in ABE. This may not be feasible--or acceptable--when the co-sponsor is a large employer, but it is often practicable when planning classes with indigenous community organizations. Involving participants is one way to ensure the relevance of ABE to their needs and interests and of fostering commitment to the program.

The co-sponsor's active support can also be crucial to ABE's success. Co-sponsoring organizations should be urged to provide special incentives and rewards for members or employees who participate in ABE. A highly desirable but exceptional example is paid released time to attend class. Also desirable and exceptional is a commitment by the employer to consider successful "graduates" for job promotions. Even modest incentives or sanctions can be helpful. For example, ABE can be given visibility and prestige by a public statement of company recognition or a newsletter announcement. Leaders of community organizations can promote a positive image of ABE by stressing the special status of participants and the accomplishment of completing the program.

It appears that large, highly centralized ABE programs closely tied to the public school structure are more likely to enter into co-sponsor relationships with other large bureaucratic organizations. This seems to be the case in larger cities, but size is not the only determinant. Another is program philosophy, specifically emphasis on community uplift or on more traditional educational values. Programs with a community uplift or social welfare orientation in large cities tend to be characterized by a more flexible decentralized structure. They tend to seek co-sponsorship with small community organizations. The most flexible and least highly structured programs tend to be in smaller cities. They are more oriented to the community than to the public schools and traditional public school educational values. They usually more effectively seek co-sponsorship with such local organizations as churches, neighborhood associations and CAP agencies. The general pattern, with many exceptions, is to relate to co-sponsors similar in size and organizational structure to the ABE program.

This is not always desirable, but exceptions may be difficult to initiate and sustain. For example, co-sponsorship between a small community oriented program and a very large organization can require so great a commitment of staff time and program resources as to reduce program flexibility and deflect the program from its original goals. Conversely, large centralized programs often lack sufficient flexibility to create linkages with small community organizations, each involving special requirements. One way to cope with this limitation is to establish a community liaison role within the program expressly charged with fostering and developing co-sponsorship with community organizations.

Community liaison requires specialized knowledge of the target community, personal acceptability there and skill in dealing effectively with people. The most desirable liaison persons are individuals whose primary occupations or former occupations complement the liaison role, such as welfare aides, ministers or teachers. It is of great advantage if liaison staff have roots or extensive contacts in the target community. Persons with backgrounds in complementary occupations are more likely to be skilled in working with people and familiar with the culture and problems of the community. They are not only "pre-trained," but if employed part-time are often able to do ABE liaison work in the in the course of their regular employment.

It is important that the liaison role be carefully defined and responsibilities spelled out. When this is not done, liaison staff tend to devote most of their time to other assignments required of them.

An important component of the liaison role that requires greater emphasis is feedback and evaluation. Often the director has little knowledge of what is going on in outreach classes. Liaison staff can provide valuable feedback on such matters as relevance of classes to community needs and teacher competency. Provision should also be made for coordination between liaison staff, teachers and counselors, particularly in matters related to community feedback, student recruitment and student retention.

Section II

A. RECOGNIZE MAJOR DYNAMICS OF THE ABE CLASSROOM SIDE FROM AIDING CONTENT MASTERY TO IMPROVE TEACHER PERFORMANCE.

Common patterns of classroom dynamics constitute important qualitative norms for the identification of staff development needs, supervision and assessment of teacher performance.

Major determinants which shape classroom interaction include the ubiquitous administrative pressure felt by the teacher to maintain attendance, absence of extrinsic incentives to deter dropouts, extreme diversity among students including their objectives (a better job, passing a Civil Service test, getting a driver's license, helping children do school work, socialization, passing the time, therapy) and distinctive characteristics of educationally disadvantaged adults (fear and expectation of failure, easily offended, limited energy and attention span, lack of skill in how to learn, varied conceptions of time and punctuality, etc.)

These factors produce a situation in which there is seldom formation of true groups which can be used to foster learning through shared experience, to evolve shared values and to support attitudinal change. The process of socialization is attenuated. ABE is also distinguished by a markedly relaxed set of classroom rules and conventions - late arrivals, early departures, sleeping, chatting, wandering; atmosphere is permissive, friendly, informal. In many classes effectiveness of instruction will be a function of how well custodial, social, "park bench" and social service functions are carried out.

As students can enroll anytime, usually with little or no screening, there is a major problem of accomodating late starters and returning absentees. Students do not compete with each other and are almost never permitted to fail - mistakes are handled by a wide variety of tactics: prompting, permitting delayed responses, redefining the task into simple components, rephrasing a troublesome question, giving an easier alternative assignment and many others. Teachers avoid or delay testing, blur benchmarks of progress, coach students for tests and emphasize their non-judgmental nature. Skill in failure management is important to teacher performance.

Possibilities open to the ABE teacher to control student attention and classroom disruptions are limited primarily to the use of banter, generalized injunctions to the class and looking the other way. Direct commands and other situations which may force a confrontation are avoided. Attempts to control the inattentive or mildly disruptive are usually counterproductive.

Instructional methods and content are heavily laden with the crust of elementary school tradition of present-recite/test-correct. The modal pattern involves a teacher presentation or assignment followed in ESL by class level drill, dialogue or especially solicited or required individual response. In EAE students are taught more frequently on an individual level. Teachers infrequently use small learning groups; practice and recitation are common small group functions when used. Teachers attend to the "middle" range of students and hope to deal with others on an individual basis. Marked attrition in attendance of slower and more advanced students results.

In single class sites heterogeneity makes individualization of instruction essential.

Instruction is individualized in ABE most commonly while a class is working on a problem or individual assignments. It is accomplished by either seeking out those who have trouble and want help or by walking up and down aisles and either stopping at each desk in turn or responding to requests for attention.

Three innovative patterns of instruction have been identified. One is that of the learning laboratory in which students are tested and an individual work plan is prescribed. The student comes in at his own convenience and pursues his assignments by individual self-instruction aided by reading machines and other learning devices. He may request tutorial help as he needs it from a teacher in attendance. The student is periodically retested and his work plan reformulated. There is usually poor communication between the lab and classroom teachers in the program; probably teachers should rotate between lab and classroom. For most students some combination of lab with small group instruction is best, perhaps with increasing proportion of time devoted to lab work as they advance.

Another promising approach lets the participants in a class dictate the order and pace of covering desired content rather than following a logical order of presenting topics as determined by the teacher or materials writer. Major concepts are covered in an order determined by student involvement in defining problems, illustrating concepts and testing meanings in their personal experience. Class interaction determines speed with which there is movement from topic to topic and in what order this is done.

A third pattern involves the teacher giving different assignments to small groups, some groups working with more or less difficult materials, and the teacher acting as a resource person and multi-group member. Students select which group they wish to go into. Friends are encouraged to stay together and there is much socializing within groups. Individuals are encouraged and expected to complete their own assignments and have freedom to "do their own thing" as long as they do not create disturbances. The use of learning groups is of potential value for fostering attitude change. Use of discussion as an instructional method is rare in ABE; where used it usually evokes interest and involvement.

The value of interpreting abstract ideas in terms relevant to the lives of ABE students has wide acceptance in theory, but little planning is done for such effort. Important "latent lessons" are learned without being taught: education as dysfunctional or as the high road to mobility and success, phased progression to a goal, self-directedness in learning, industriousness, etc. Students are almost never involved in any aspect of program planning or evaluation; they vote with their feet.

Content is influenced by the GED and other tests, especially in intermediate and advanced classes, which are the most frequently found in the program. Serious students, especially at these levels seek benchmarks of progress and welcome confidential test results. Testing is primarily a threat to beginning students. Health, consumer, family life and civic education and "coping" skills are taught only incidentally and almost never included in tests. Teachers seldom prepare their own materials, but are eclectic in using what is available; programmed materials are not popular.

Paraprofessionals are used in clerical work, administration, housekeeping, child care, recruiting and instruction. Underlying functions are assuming work overload, distasteful work, low-valued work, sharing of work, counseling and rescuing students and teachers from each other. Aides should be able and willing jacks-of-all trades. Paraprofessionals have special value in coping with teachers' major problems of attendance maintenance (by recruiting, contacting absentees and baby sitting) and heterogeneity (by instructing sub-groups and individuals) and students' major problem of the continuing interruption of newcomers into the class, (by teaching beginners).

In assessing the need for paraprofessionals to share teaching functions, priority should be given to teachers who have heterogenous classes with a wide range of achievement, involving instruction at several levels and subjects, and who teach sub-groups within a class and individualize instruction. These conditions are more apt to pertain to classes in decentralized locations and in EAE rather than ESL. Effective use of an aide for instruction will be in part a function of how the teacher allocates her time between class, sub-groups and individuals and her pace of alternating among them. Instruction must be organized to optimally use the time of the aide in instruction.

To foster teacher-aide "fit" the teacher should be permitted to choose from among several candidates and trial periods should be planned. Experienced aides should not be transferred unless necessary because of lack of "fit" or otherwise essential.

Factors relevant to the success of volunteers include amount of time for service, prior training, teacher willingness to supervise and instruct, knowledge of native language of students,

disposition to accept teacher's authority, warmth and empathy; many of these factors also pertain to paid aides.

B. ENCOURAGE PREPARATION OF SHORT TERM INSTRUCTIONAL UNITS WHICH PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON LEARNER PROGRESS TOWARD THEIR GOALS.

"Individualized instruction" is widely misconstrued to mean individualized prescriptions to meet program rather than learner goals. Many participants come to acquire specific skills for specific purposes but are shoehorned into a program oriented toward eighth grade or high school equivalency. Getting a driver's license or passing a specific civil service test requires specialized content and effort. Short-term goals should be legitimized and instruction modified accordingly.

Significant inclusion of education in urban living - consumer health, family life, human relations, civic education as well as "coping" skills will be effected only if deliberate effort is made to set aside time for instruction. This is not being done in the ABE program. Resources must be allocated to appropriate curricula, materials and methods and ABE teachers and aides trained and encouraged in their use. Instruction in these areas is typically incidental and unsystematic. Content and skills involved are beyond the experience of most ABE teachers. If more emphasis is to be put on content other than the 3 R's, federal guidelines should be made more specific and funds locally allocated for curriculum development. Otherwise, the program will be found wanting in evaluating progress toward meeting these implied ambiguous objectives. "Education for

urban living" must be defined in realistic short-term program intentions if it is meant to be more than rhetoric.

Short-term participant goals are important. Many enroll with only vague notions of what the program has to offer and with unrealistic expectations of the time needed to reach their goals. Their objectives must often be reformulated in terms of a series of realistic, progressive, short-term objectives. Greater emphasis is required on orientation and counseling new and prospective participants. A majority come for job related reasons; a vigorous program of vocational counseling and job placement will significantly increase enrollment and reduce dropouts. Referral to public employment agencies has proven inadequate to the needs of this particular group. A record of job placement and achievement of other short-term goals represents a tangible benefit of advantage in building program support.

Because participants often are unclear about what the program can offer them and the time and effort required to meet their goals, once over their initial fears they require continuous private feedback of their short-term performance. For those who wish it, results of achievement tests should be included. This especially applies to participants in intermediate and advanced levels of instruction. Although new or beginning participants may require strong and continuing encouragement to offset fear of failure, the more advanced want to know how they are doing in relation to their goals. Those unable to "locate" themselves are often discouraged and confused.

C. INCORPORATE SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE FACTORS IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION.

To improve program practice it is essential that planners have a dependable normative description of ABE program practice, classroom interaction and the perspectives of those involved. Both modal and innovative patterns should be included in this description. In the absence of such qualitative benchmarks, measurement techniques are frequently indiscriminately used to measure only those aspects of program development most amenable to measurement. Qualitative factors of evolving interaction - critical to program success - are often ignored. "Objectives" or program intents are seldom modified by evaluators to reflect subsequent realities of implementation. "Instruments" are devised to study often arbitrarily selected aspects of the program displacing less tangible objectives. How and by whom shall crucial questions of the priority and order of program consequences be decided? This is usually quite arbitrarily done by the external evaluator. Preoccupation with program "output" mitigates against needed assessment of the development of organizational capability to mount and sustain ABE programs.

Administrators need a management information system which encompasses qualitative factors in program development. Their internal operational analyses should involve a continuous flow of comparative data on classroom interaction and on how students and teachers see the program and themselves in relation to it. From such data common problems could be identified, policy and program priorities soundly established, staff development planned with dependable

knowledge of current classroom practice and innovations identified. When combined with evaluative measurement of program outcome, the administrator would know not only whether his program is producing gains but why - and how to improve them.

How methods of qualitative analysis demonstrated by the national ABE study conducted by the Center for Adult Education at Teachers College might be adapted for use by an administrator in his own urban program deserves careful study by directors and professors of adult education.

Section III

A. RECOGNIZE THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF INSTRUCTIONAL ROLES AND UTILIZE PARAPROFESSIONALS AND COUNSELORS TO OPTIMIZE INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS.

ABE is unique in the autonomy of the classroom teacher to choose teaching strategies and curriculum materials and to plan program content. The success of the teacher, nevertheless, is largely dependent on the support of administrators, counselors, and, in some programs, paraprofessionals and volunteers.

Paraprofessionals and Volunteers

The interdependence of instructional roles is most evident in the relationship between the teacher and the paid or unpaid aide. The paraprofessional can perform instructional tasks with individuals or small groups, or he can relieve the teacher of non-instructional chores so that more time may be devoted to participants. In addition, aides can assist with recruitment and follow up on absentees. They may also conduct a "feeder" section of the class so that incoming adults will not interrupt the instruction of other participants. In one instance observed, paraprofessionals were used as babysitters so that the adults could attend class.

Where the teacher and the participants come from different cultural or racial backgrounds, the aide who shares the participants' cultural perspectives can act as bridge between the students and the ABE program. Although administrators often voice their approval of this paraprofessional role, most programs seem to de-emphasize this function in practice. The most salient day-to-day concern is fitting the paraprofessional to the teacher's classroom style. Moreover, the role of bridge to the community is difficult for the aide, who must balance his

loyalty to the program and to the participants. Particularly in classes where participants and aide speak a language the teacher does not understand, there is the possibility of friction--especially when the aide sees himself as an advocate for the participants.

The precise role the aide plays in any one classroom is determined in varying measure by state laws and local regulations, the expectations of local ABE administrators, the style of the teacher in the classroom, the source of funding for paid aides, the demands of students, and the desires of the aide himself. The most important determinant is probably the teacher's style. Aides are most often productively used in instructional roles when the teacher organizes his class into small groups or individual units. Reliance on instruction involving the class as a whole often relegates the aide to a clerical role. It may be useful, therefore, to encourage teachers who can organize a classroom into small learning groups to teach the more heterogeneous classes found in single class sites and to provide them with instructional aides.

Unpaid volunteers often come to the program with higher levels of education than do paid paraprofessionals, who are often recruited from the same community as the target population. This characteristic of the volunteer accounts in part for the greater use of volunteers in purely instructional roles than is the case with paid aides. Moreover, because the paid aide depends on salary provided by the program, he is less likely than the volunteer to leave when dissatisfied. Consequently, teachers have more leverage in assigning tasks to the paid paraprofessional. Where paid aides and volunteers are used in the same classroom, the volunteer is more likely to fill a tutorial role while the aide may be assigned clerical duties. Administrators should be aware of this tendency when they assign aides to the classroom.

The expectations of the ABE administration are important determinants of the aide's role. Some formalization of paraprofessional roles is useful administratively and encourages efficient use of aide time; too much formalization or specification of aide functions, however, will restrict the aide's usefulness to the teacher and may preclude the development of a compatible working relationship between teacher and aide.

An effective working relationship in the classroom is crucial to the productive use of the aide but difficult to achieve. Some administrators have successfully dealt with this problem by individually placing each aide with a compatible teacher. Alternatively, teachers could be permitted to choose aides from among several candidates. The "fit" of aide and teacher can be influenced by pre-service or in-service training for both. Most teachers who work with aides express a desire for better pre-service preparation for the paraprofessional. A pre-service training program can extend the range of roles the aide is capable of assuming while screening out clearly unsuitable candidates. If pre-service training accustoms the aide to a particular teaching style, however, it may lead to friction with a teacher whose methods conflict with the aide's expectations. The importance of on-the-job training in cooperation with the teacher is thus indicated.

In-service training can equally assist the teacher to modify teaching techniques to use aides more efficiently and to view the aide more as a member of the professional staff than as a subordinate.

Counselors

Teachers and counselors share responsibility for acclimating the ABE participant to the instructional program, helping him define his

particular instructional needs and assisting him to apply his education to the environment beyond the classroom. There is a lack of consensus among professionals as to the most effective role for counselors in these tasks. Some counselors do little else but testing. Others are prodded by supervisors who believe that "coping is the name of the game" and that counselors should concentrate on helping participants deal with the power structure. Counselors may screen participants and place them in classes, test them do job placement, make referrals to social service and health agencies and counsel on a variety of educational, vocational and personal problems. They may also arrange for speakers from such agencies as the League of Women Voters, a bureau of consumer frauds or the city housing authority. One demonstration project reported good results with regularly scheduled group counseling sessions, but in a setting radically different from the typical ABE program.

Many enroll in ABE classes with only vague notions of what the program has to offer and with unrealistic expectations of the time needed to reach their goals. One can expect that retention and participant performance will be increased by greater program emphasis on orientation and counseling of new participants. Those at intermediate and advanced levels are particularly likely to benefit from continuous private feedback on their performance, including results of achievement tests. Although participants--particularly new enrollees--often need strong and continuing encouragement to offset fears of failure, most want to know how well they are doing in relation to their goals. Those unable to "locate" themselves are often discouraged and confused.

Participants are likely to consult counselors about educational or vocational problems, but rarely ask assistance with more personal difficulties. It is often the case that counselors are white and the ABE participants black or from another ethnic minority. This difference may limit communication between student and counselor. In fact, the teacher is more likely to develop a familiarity with the out-of-school life of the participant; the counselor may see a participant no more than once or twice during the year.

Problems relating to health, jobs, housing and family life probably affect dropout rates as much or more than inadequacies in the program itself. Assistance is clearly needed to at least deal with those social problems amenable to change. Some argue that the counselor should be involved as little as possible with academic concerns but should help participants solve the problems that inhibit efficient participation in the ABE class. Where counselor availability is limited, however, and teachers are better able to understand participants' out-of-school problems, there are obvious implications for greater teacher involvement in the counseling process.

Teachers often do not have time to familiarize themselvers with various social service and health resources in their participants' communities. Perhaps the counselor's role in many programs could become one of resource trainer and backstopper for the classroom teacher, making it possible for the teacher to more effectively assume the counseling function.

Most ABE participants are motivated to attend class to change their job status. This suggests the need to develop vocational counseling and job placement competencies in the ABE program, either through direct contacts with employers or through cultivated linkages with state or city

job placement or training programs. The heavy reliance of ABE programs on word-of-mouth for recruitment also argues for improving job placement capabilities. Word of mouth operates with special effectiveness when the prospective participant learns that others have obtained jobs as a result of their ABE experience. There is also good likelihood that the addition of counselors for vocational advisement and placement would reduce ABE's drop-out rate.

B. ALLOCATE MORE RESOURCES FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT DESIGNED TO DEAL WITH INSTRUCTION AND CLASSROOM INTERACTION AS IT EXISTS IN REALITY.

Teacher performance will be most enhanced by training which focuses upon analysis of actual classroom performance with opportunity for practice and feedback in specific skill areas identified in this study. ABE teachers need guided practice in personalizing abstract ideas, using learning groups, discussion and other methods of adult education to evoke student involvement. How to involve and motivate in the first and early meetings, ask questions, teach "coping" skills (including those involved in learning), prepare instructional materials and innovate in various instructional approaches are training priorities. Video tapes of ABE classroom instruction can be invaluable for teachers to learn to analyze commonalities and variations in the organization of instruction, of methods of mediating content with learner experience, patter social interaction, and the mechanisms of failure management and control. "Understanding the student population" should consist less of generalized insights about the culture of poverty from the literature and more of inquiry arising out of observed classroom behavior.

Teachers and paraprofessionals should be trained for complementarity -- teachers how to organize instruction to optimally use paraprofessionals, paraprofessionals how to perform functions to fit into the plan. Both should become familiar with alternative ways of organizing instruction and aides should be trained to assume appropriate roles as different styles of teaching are encountered.

Many training programs for aides are inadequate because they tend to establish a single model for aide performance when there is great variety in teacher styles requiring different mixes of roles on the part of paraprofessionals. Paraprofessionals should be trained as-jacks-of-all trades to assure flexibility. Again, video taped classroom operations illustrating how an aide functions in various situations and field observation can be useful. Pre-service training can usefully include orientation to ABE and the schools, participant needs, materials and equipment and a frank discussion of common problems. A special effort should be made to build spirit and enthusiasm for work in the program. Training should be subsequently developed around common problems encountered by aides in their work. It should be continuous and the process should involve supervisors and experienced teachers. Whenever possible, this should include the teacher with whom the aide is working.

The system should provide for upward mobility by which paraprofessionals can aspire and work to become qualified ABE teachers. There should also be provision for salary increments and other incentives for those who wish to remain aides and prove to be valuable in these positions. In the absence of such provisions morale is damaged and those hired as links to the local community tend to build a separate ideology predicated upon their sense of closeness and sensitivity to the point of view of students and their greater capacity to understand and relate to them - sometimes at the expense of the teacher's relatioship with students. These aides can perform

as vital communications links with students only if they do not alienate the teacher by being competitive for student approval and serving in the role of their advocate. This problem should be worked through insofar as possible in the training of aides.

Paid and especially unpaid paraprofessionals should have their positions formalized with identification cards, certificates of completion of training, formal application procedures, interviews and the amenities extended to teachers. These are often neglected to the detriment of morale.

Continuing in-service training - with released time - for teachers, supervisors and counselors should be specifically related to the distinctive problems of ABE and its participants. Staff development teams involving master teachers and instructional supervisors could prove useful. In multi-class sites, the master teacher, with a lightened teaching load, could perform in an instructional supervisory role, freeing regular supervisors to give more attention to decentralized classes.

Training of ABE teachers will be improved and the program professionalized by the collaborative development by professors of adult education and ABE professionals of university programs with special emphasis on supervised field experience. There should be built-in salary, time in lieu of teaching, or employment preference incentives for teachers to participate. The program should be related to on-going in-service training conducted by the various school districts. Universities should develop continuing training, consultation, demonstration, materials development, action research

and operational analysis services for local ABE programs through cooperative contracts with several districts. Such an arrangement might be established on a demonstration basis with Title III, Section 309 funds to test its value and with states or cities agreeing to assume increasing proportions of the cost as direct federal support is phased out over time.

Staff development might also include assignment of experienced teachers to a curriculum development team to develop materials in lieu of teaching assignments.

There is a reluctance by many ABE directors to release teachers from classroom duty for training and materials development assignments. The rationalization is that doing so would "rob the students." But our research reveals high dropout rates, the prevalence of dysfunctional teaching methods and styles and a dearth of relevant instructional materials. In no other program in the public schools is there greater need to professionalize instruction by making it functional and relevant to the needs of a specialized student body. Teachers, the organization of instruction, teaching methods, curricula and instructional materials are all borrowed with little adaptation from programs designed for a totally different population. Directors are penny wise and pound foolish to resist allocating resources for staff development.

C. PERIODICALLY REVIEW INNOVATIVE PROGRAM PRACTICES AND SYSTEMATICALLY INCORPORATE THE MOST PROMISING.

The institutional marginality of ABE and the over-extension of resources in the effort to maximize service are major factors that inhibit development of innovative program practices. Moreover, innovation in ABE tends to occur in isolation. Teachers have little detailed familiarity with effective practices in other classrooms. Directors have limited knowledge of effective program practices in other cities. During this period of consolidation following their initial growth period, federally supported ABE programs need systematic procedures to identify innovative practices and to institutionalize the most effective.

Many of the most promising innovative practices are found in relatively few cities. Paradoxically, practices found innovative and effective in some cities have been tried and abandoned by others. Examples of innovative practices include:

- Co-sponsorship of ABE classes in which the co-sponsor makes a substantial input toward achieving objectives.
- Inclusion in the local school budget of a financial cushion to minimize problems related to delay in receipt of federal funds.
- Operation of a large ABE facility to provide comprehensive program offerings and related services.
- Individualization of instruction, including the use of learning groups and learning laboratory equipment and materials.
- Preparation and circulation of evaluations of new materials.
- Selective and effective use of trained paraprofessionals.
- Employment of liaison staff to facilitate linkage with community groups.

The following procedures constitute a strategy that a director

might use to incorporate effective innovative practices in his ABE program as part of a process of planned change.

- Monitor innovations. Some innovations are reported in publications of the ERIC Adult Education Clearinghouse, of associations such as NAPCAE and AEA and in reports and reviews of demonstration projects. Innovations may be discovered by visits to classrooms and to programs in other cities. Establish procedures by which the director and some of his staff regularly identify innovations.

- Select promising innovations. Only a few can be incorporated at any one time. The ABE staff should periodically screen innovations that have been identified to select a few which would seem to make the greatest contribution to the local program.

- Explore experience. Assume or assign the responsibility for securing detailed information about how the practice developed and is working elsewhere. Include analysis of both the dynamics of its operation and factors facilitating and inhibiting its development. Anticipate whether these or other factors would pertain to its introduction and development in your program.

- Test practice. Most practices require adaptation if they are to succeed in a different situation. This is facilitated by a limited local trial with extensive evaluation.

- Facilitate adoption. Provide incentives. In addition to time off and extra pay, facilitators could include staff assistance, extra materials, travel funds and recognition for implementing an innovation.

- Institutionalization. Make provision for standardizing the practice by fostering a commitment to its long term use by those on whom its continuation will depend.

- Report results. Fulfill professional responsibilities to the field by reporting results of efforts to incorporate innovative practices--both positive and negative. You will be helping colleagues and the field to move out of the stage of inventing the wheel over and over again. Reports can be disseminated through publications and association meetings.

In assessing innovative practices in a demonstration project, it is important to recognize that not all demonstrations are pilot projects. Demonstration projects often are designed to develop new practices for "the field;" the objective is to establish the advantage of specific practices which may be replicated, although the project itself is not suitable for replication or for incorporation as an integral part of an on-going program. A pilot-type demonstration project is meant to be incorporated into the regular program. There are distinct advantages to developing pilot projects within the context of existing programs rather than to staff and organize them outside established organizational structure and procedures. Many ABE programs have found it difficult to incorporate demonstration projects into their regular operations.

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